

38th Transportation Battalion



*38th Transportation Battalion Unit Crest
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World War II and Cold War

The unit designation, 23rd Quartermaster Regiment (Truck-Corps), was constituted on 1 May 1936 as part of the Regular Army. It was redesignated the 23rd Quartermaster Regiment (Truck) on 8 January 1940, then just the 23rd Quartermaster Truck Regiment on 1 April 1942. The 1st Battalion was activated at Camp Young, California, on 1 August 1942, the 2nd Battalion was activated at Camp Barkley, Texas, on 15 August 1942 and the 3rd Battalion was activated at Camp Bowie, Texas, on 15 August 1942. However, 1st Battalion was inactivated on 25 August 1943 then broken up into separate numbered battalions on 23 October 1943. Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD) as 23rd Quartermaster Group; HHD, 1st Battalion became HHD, 38th Quartermaster Battalion Mobile; HHD, 2nd Battalion became HHD, 42nd Quartermaster Battalion Mobile; and HHD, 3rd Battalion became 111th Quartermaster Battalion Mobile. The lettered companies, A through H, became the 3341st through 3348th Quartermaster Truck Companies with separate lineages.

HHD, 38th Quartermaster Battalion Mobile followed its own lineage. On 1 August 1946, the unit was converted to the Transportation Corps and redesignated as HHD, 38th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion. Then again on 16 February 1951, the unit was redesignated Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 38th Transportation Truck Battalion. It was reactivated at Munich, Germany on 1 June 1951. There it was attached to the 10th Transportation Highway Group.

During the Cold War, US Army Europe established its line of communication back to the ports of Northern France. The 37th Transportation Highway Group had responsibility for the first leg of the line haul. It handed off cargo to the 10th Group in Germany, which then delivered to the garrisons and units in the field. The 10th Transportation Highway Group consisted of the 27th, 29th, and 38th Transportation Battalions.

On 1 April 1953, it was redesignated HHC, 38th Transportation Battalion (Truck). In 1956, the battalion was located at Ludwigsburg, Germany.

On 20 February 1959, the unit was redesignated HHD, 38th Transportation Battalion (Truck). It had three companies at Worms, Germany. The 513th Transportation

Company was reactivated in Germany on 1 June 1959. The 594th ended up in Germany at the end of the war and remained there until 12 August 1968 when it transferred to Fort Campbell. The 34th Light Truck was reactivated in Germany on 7 June 1951. It delivered cargo to units assigned in Germany.

In 1968, the 38th Battalion served under the 107th Transportation Brigade. The 38th Battalion left Coleman Barracks, Mannheim, Germany and arrived at Fort Eustis, Virginia, on 20 September 1968. The 100th Transportation Company also left Germany, and arrived at Fort Eustis on 3 August, where it was initially assigned to the 716th Transportation Group (Railway). The 38th Battalion was assigned to the 7th Transportation Command. The 716th Transportation Group (Railway) was inactivated and the 100th Light/Medium Truck, 203rd Light Truck, and 508th Medium Truck Companies were then attached to the 38th Transportation Battalion. The battalion assumed responsibility for the operation of the driver training and testing section. It routinely conducted summer training for cadets at West Point and the Transportation Officers Basic Course and Skill Development Base at Fort Eustis. The 716th Group was inactivated on 3 September 1968 and the 100th and 508th Transportation Companies were attached to the newly arrived 38th Battalion.

The 455th Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer) was officially activated on 17 July 1967. The personnel began to arrive in October and were sent to the 92nd Terminal Battalion until the full activation of the company on 5 December. The company was reassigned to the 182nd Terminal Battalion on 6 May 1968 and then the 38th Truck Battalion on 1 October 1968, commanded by LTC Clifford E. Young.

In 1969, the battalion had the following:

HHD

100th Transportation Company (Light-Medium Truck)

203rd Transportation Company (Light Truck)

455th Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

508th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

In January 1969, the 38th Battalion was authorized its unit crest. During 1969, the battalion was responsible for preparing four truck companies for their move to US Army Europe. With the War in Vietnam, the battalion experienced a critical shortage of truck drivers but passed its Command Maintenance Inspection (CMI).

From 10 to 18 November 1969, the 100th Company supported riot control units in Washington, DC. On 3 December 1969, the 203rd Transportation Company, a Reserve unit from Garden City, New York, was released from 18 months active duty and the 561st Transportation Company was activated to accomplish its mission.

In 1970, the battalion received the requirement to operate the Post Dempster Dumpster system. The 455th Transportation Company was assigned to the battalion to accomplish that tasking. The 455th also received the tasking to clean out McDonald Army Hospital Warehouse at Patrick Henry Airfield. The 100th supported First Army ROTC summer

camp at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania; Camp Drum, New York and Camp Pickett. During the months of July through September 1970, the battalion averaged 1118 truck commitments per month. The next three months, the battalion averaged 1147 commitments per month.

In 1970, the battalion then consisted of the following:

HHD

100th Transportation Company (Light-Medium Truck)

455th Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

508th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

561st Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

In July 1971, the 100th Truck Company was sent to Indiantown Gap Military Reservation to support ROTC summer camp. The battalion also participated in civil disturbance control in Washington, DC from 1 to 6 May 1971, transporting 7,100 troops and 204 tons of cargo.

In 1972, the 38th Transportation Battalion consisted of the following:

HHD

100th Transportation Company (Light-Medium Truck)

455th Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

508th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

561st Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

491st Transportation Detachment (Cargo Documentation)

544th Transportation Detachment (Trailer Transfer Point)

The 100th Truck Company left on temporary duty on 8 January 1969. On 23 and 24 March 1972, the 38th Battalion participated in C-5A Air Transportability Training at Langley Air Force Base. The 451st Company was relieved from the 10th Battalion and assigned to the 38th Battalion on 7 August then inactivated on 19 December. The Railway Operating Detachment (Provisional) was attached to the 455th on 22 May. The 455th was also inactivated on 19 December and the 870th Transportation Company was attached to the 38th Battalion. The 451st Transportation Company was also inactivated in December 1972 and its mission was passed to the 544th Transportation Detachment (Trailer Transfer).

In September 1973, the 491st Transportation Detachment (Cargo Documentation) was relieved from HHD, 38th Battalion and attached to the 100th Transportation Company.

In 1973, the Continental Army Command (CONARC) split into Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and Forces Command (FORSCOM). On 9 October, the 38th Battalion was reassigned from the First Army to FORSCOM Headquarters at Fort McPherson, Georgia. On 21 March 1974, the battalion went from a Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) unit for training support to a Mission TOE unit to support the XVIII Airborne Corps for contingency operations. It only gained changes in equipment. It picked up the 90th Transportation Detachment on 21 May 1974. The

battalion had received the augmentation of the 16th, 90th, 160th, and 491st Detachments, but approximately fifty percent of the personnel were pending separation from the service.

As a cost cutting move by Headquarters Department of the Army, 551st Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer) moved from Fort Story to Fort Eustis by LCMs and LCUs from 16 to July 1973. As a result of this move, the 561st was released from attachment to the 79th Terminal Battalion and attached to the 38th Motor Battalion. The 551st had been activated at the end of fiscal year 1972 and constituted from personnel of the inactivated 462nd Terminal Transfer Company. While the company had the equipment to transship cargo, it did not have the right military occupational skills (MOS) for the jobs. Since August 1973, the unit was essentially a holding company for personnel on special duty (SD) around post. This frustration of the commander was typified by his comment in the company's 1973 annual history report, "The Special Duty personnel are one big problem. Because they are so spread out, they are hard to contact and tend to think of themselves in terms of their duty section, rather than as a member of the 551st. It is extremely hard to get them to come to formations, as rare as they are, let alone any sort of training."

The Railway Operating Detachment (Provisional) and Fort Eustis Honor Guard was also attached to the company in August. The 544th Trailer Transfer Point Detachment was attached to the company in August 1973 to perform its TOE mission. The company moved 200 MILVAN containers during the first five months of 1973. During March 1973, the company even participated in the 79th Battalion FTX but most of the transportation training was curtailed because of inclement weather.

The battalion trained at Fort A. P. Hill in a field training exercise from 16 to 26 April then from 6 to 10 May, the 870th Company participated in an Emergency Readiness Deployment Exercise (EDRE).

XVIII Airborne Corps developed the EDRE concept to test the ability of the units under its command to deploy on short notice. The personnel of the 870th arrived within the required 24 hours, but when the vehicles were inspected by Paul Hurley from the XVIII Airborne Corps for uploading in the aircraft, they failed miserably. Hurley wanted to relieve every one, but was challenged on the grounds that the inspection checklist was classified and the battalion had not seen it before. If they knew the standard then the battalion could prepare for it. Not only that, but the trucks were continually on the road so it was difficult to maintain them in inspection status. At that time, units on deployment status did not shut down. In the end, XVIII Airborne Corps simplified the inspection and declassified portions of the checklist. However, the battalion failed to pass its Annual Inspector General inspection for 1974 and both the battalion commander and command sergeant major retired from active duty both on 31 August. The battalion commander had only been in command for one year.

LTC James A. Tolcher, the new battalion commander, took steps to improve the readiness of his unit. In April, the 100th participated in a field training exercise at Fort A. P. Hill. On 24 November 1975, the 38th Battalion began the first in a series of battalion

level EDREs. The EDRE continued during 2 through 5 December when HHD and the 100th Company supported the 24th Battalion logistics-over-the-shore (LOTS) exercise at Fort Story, Virginia. The exercise revealed many of the problems encountered in establishing and operation a battalion headquarters in a field environment. Aggressor probes and penetrations of the perimeter stressed the tactical aspects of the battalion operations. Knowledge of chemical, biological and radiation (CBR) defense measures and camouflage, cover and concealment were also stressed. The planning for and monitoring of the convoys of the 100th Transportation Company contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Operations Section. The battalion supported every major operation or exercise undertaken by Fort Eustis or 7th Transportation Group.

The battalion, however, continued to suffer critical shortage of drivers which affected the performance of first echelon maintenance on the vehicles. Its involvement in the support of other units of the 7th Group at Fort Eustis and unannounced EDREs or last minute support requirements disrupted normal operations. The short notice EDREs, which were frequent, took priority of assets and required nearly all the trucks to support them.

1975 also was the year that women were integrated into the battalion. Prior to that women served primarily as clerks and nurses in the Women's Army Corps. They had their own female chain of command and lived in separate barracks. By abolishing the WACs, women were offered the opportunity to serve equally with men in the combat service support branches. Integration always has its growing pains. The annual history report identified the early problems of integration.

"The influx of female personnel into the Army and the 38th Battalion is creating problems also. The number of female personnel assigned at the beginning of 1975 was relatively small, but by December has swelled to approximately 45. The problem of billeting for these EWs [enlisted women] was solved by designating separate areas of the barracks. Other more deep seated problems regarding interrelationships with enlisted men, supervisors and commanders are still being dealt with. The ideals of complete equality and uniformity between male and female, although evident in spirit, will still require time and changes to be completely realized."

In 1976, the 38th Battalion consisted of the following:

- HHD

- 100th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

- 508th Transportation Company

- 551st Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

- 160th Transportation Detachment (Contract Supervision)

- 491st Transportation Detachment (Cargo Documentation)

The 100th Trans conducted an EDRE in January. The 38th Battalion supported the 24th Battalion's EDRE from 1 to 5 March. Then the 100th and 551st Companies deployed to Fort A. P. Hill on 8 March for another FTX. HHD, 100th and 551st Companies participated in another battalion level EDRE from 13 to 17 September. The exercise culminated in a deployment to Fort A. P. Hill for ten days of range firing and HHD's

Annual Training Test (ATT). No sooner than they returned than XVIII Airborne Corps called an EDRE for the 24th Transportation Battalion on 20 September. Since the 38th supported the 24th with trucks, the 38th had to cancel their FTX and ATT. HHD, 100th and 551st Companies participated in an FTX from 6 to 9 December.

The 160th Contract Supervision and 491st Cargo Documentation Detachments were alerted for deployment to Germany as part of REFORGER 76. The 101st Airborne Division would deploy with 342 helicopters by three Military Sealift Command Roll On/Roll Off (RO/RO) vessels to the Port of Bremerhaven, Germany, and Vlissingen, Netherlands. This was the first time an airmobile unit would arrive with all of its helicopters. It became a high visibility operation. The battalion began to stock the detachments with a number of senior officers and NCOs from April through June at the cost of other units. The detachments had been dormant attachments to the battalion before that. The two detachments supported the discharge and retrograde of the equipment during REFORGER from 15 August through 8 October. Although, LTC Sidney P. Dugas had assumed command of the 160th Detachment in June, he commanded both detachments during the exercise. The 38th Battalion offloaded and transported the 101st Airborne Division's equipment when it arrived at Norfolk. Upon return Dugas, CPT Vincent A. Bernhard and CPT Migdalia Quesada were reassigned.

Upon return the 491st Cargo Documentation and 544th Trailer Transfer Detachments were relieved from attachment to the 551st Transportation Company and were attached to the 24th Battalion in October 1976. The 160th Contract Supervision Detachment was transferred to the 10th Battalion on 15 December. LTC Joseph T. Ellis assumed command of the 38th Battalion from Tolcher. Ellis would go on to make brigadier general.

In 1977, the 38th Battalion had the following units:

HHD

100th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

355th Transportation Company

508th Transportation Company

551st Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer)

In 1977, the battalion conducted an EDRE for the 100th, 355th and 551st Companies in January and February. The battalion also provided motor transport and Departure Airfield support for the 24th Battalion EDRE from 14 to 18 February. The 100th, 355th and 551st Companies also conducted an FTX at Fort A. P. Hill from 7 to 12 March. The FTX was mainly to prepare the 100th for its ARTEP/MAX WAC Test. HHD underwent Phase I of a post directed EDRE on 14 March. HHD then successfully completed a post directed EDRE from 25 to 29 April. Selected personnel from the battalion participated in CPX GALLANT CREW at Fort Hood, Texas, from 17 March to 7 April. The battalion provided motor transport support to the JLOTs Pretest at Fort Story from 11 to 15 April. Selected personnel from the battalion and the 551st Company participate in Atlantic Command Exercise SOLID SHIELD 77 at Camp Lejeune and New River, North Carolina, and Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia. The Battalion again provided motor

transport for the 24th Battalion's EDRE from 6 to 10 June. The battalion then participated in Operational Readiness Training Test (ORTT) BOLD EAGLE at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida from 24 September to 25 October. The battalion was determined to be combat ready.

In 1978, HHD participated in the Joint Service Exercise EMPIRE GLACIER at Fort Drum, Alaska, from 4 January to 15 February. From 26 to 29 June, HHD participated in a battalion FTX at Fort A. P. Hill. This was the first time the entire battalion went to the field together. In June, HHD was again alerted for a Phase I EDRE and rated satisfactory. In preparation for REFORGER 79, the battalion conducted a series of FTXs, 5 to 8 September at Fort A. P. Hill and 13 to 17 November at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

On 8 August, Major General Oren De Haven assumed command of Fort Eustis. He requested that the 38th Battalion be reflagged the 6th Battalion since the 38th had no battle honors and the later had served in Vietnam. In September, he also requested that the 7th Group be reflagged as the 48th Transportation Group for the same reason. DeHaven had coincidentally commanded the 6th Battalion in Vietnam, which operated under the 48th Group.

HHD, 38th Transportation Battalion was inactivated on 28 February 1979 and the personnel and equipment were transferred to the 6th Transportation Battalion, which was reactivated at Fort Eustis, Virginia on 16 March 1979.